

## Script: Impaired Driving

**\*Please note that presenter's notes are italicized\***

***Slide 1: DEAL.org talks about Impaired Driving***

***Slide 2: What is impaired driving?***

- **Driving while your ability is affected by alcohol or drugs**
- **According to the Criminal Code, driving while impaired is a criminal offence**

*It is illegal to operate or drive any motorized vehicle while impaired, including a car, snowmobile, ATV, motorcycle, water vessel, aircraft or scooter. According to section 253 of the Criminal Code, operating a motor vehicle while impaired by alcohol or drugs is a criminal offence.*

*NOTE: Let students know that activities such as waterskiing or tubing behind boats, as well as riding a bike are illegal to do while impaired.*

Sources: [Criminal Code, section 253.](#)  
[Ontario Ministry of Transportation](#)

***Slide 3: What are the different ways you can be impaired?***

- **Alcohol**
- **Drugs**
- **Fatigue or drowsiness**

*Fatigue or drowsiness: Fatigue, drowsiness, stress and distractions can all affect your ability to drive.*

***Slide 4: Alcohol***

- **Is absorbed into your bloodstream**
- **Takes about 2 hours for one serving (1 beer, 1 half-filled glass of wine, one 'shot' of stronger alcohol such as vodka or rye) to pass through your body**
- **A breathalyzer can measure your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC), which refers to how much alcohol is in your blood**

*When you drink alcohol, it is absorbed into your bloodstream. It spreads throughout your entire body within 30 to 90 minutes, and takes about two hours for one serving to pass through your body.*

*Your BAC represents the number of milligrams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood in your system.*

*The rate at which your body absorbs alcohol differs from person to person and even day to day. The same amount of alcohol may affect you differently depending on your body type, how much water you drink, if you're stressed or tired, or even depending on your mood. Your metabolism also plays a factor in the rate at which your body gets rid of alcohol.*

*Alcohol: One drink can reduce your ability to concentrate and react to things that happen suddenly while you are driving. The more alcohol in your blood, the more difficulty you have judging distances and reacting to sudden hazards on the road.*

#### **Slide 5: Blood Alcohol Concentration**

**A Little Tipsy = 0.01 to 0.05 – relaxed/difficulty with accuracy or making quick decisions**

**Drunk = 0.05 to 0.09 – may feel confident, find it hard to remember facts/follow conversations or do several things at once**

**Wasted = 1.0 to 1.4 – can't focus, simple tasks are more difficult, you may become emotional or angry, may run into or trip over things**

**Trashed = 1.5 to 1.9 – slurred speech, trouble walking, standing or focusing, may forget where you are, may become confused, dizzy or sick**

**Major Health Hazard = 2.0 to 4.0 – may pass out or fall into a coma, can die from alcohol poisoning**

*- **A little tipsy:** Your first drink may relax you - you may notice is that it will get harder to do things that involve accuracy and making quick decisions. (Have you ever tried to play a video game after a beer?)*

*- **Drunk:** According to the Criminal Code, it is illegal to drive when your BAC is of 80mg/100ml of blood (0.08) or above. You may feel increasingly confident, find it harder to remember facts of a movie, follow conversations or do several things at once.*

*- **Wasted:** You may not be able to focus on people, and simple tasks like changing a CD or tying your shoe may become increasingly difficult. You may become very emotional, cry or become angry. You may not be able to remember things and run into or trip over things.*

*- **Trashed:** Your words may slur, you have trouble walking or standing and your reactions are very slow. You find it hard to focus your eyes. You may forget where you are, become confused, dizzy and may get sick.*

*- **Major Health Hazard:** Your body may not be able to process any more alcohol and you can pass out or fall into a coma. Once your system reaches a BAC of .25, you can die from alcohol poisoning. If it reaches .4, you most likely will die.*

Source: [Transport Canada - Smashed: A Sober Look at Drinking and Driving](#)

#### **Slide 6: What is considered “impaired driving”?**

- **A BAC over 80mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood (0.08) is the ‘legal limit’**
- **anything over this limit is considered impaired driving**

- Some provinces are lowering the legal limit – Ontario drivers could lose their license for 3 to 30 days if they are found with a BAC at or over 0.05
- Also, drivers who are under the legal limit but show signs of impairment (not driving in a straight line, slurred speech etc.) and have some alcohol content in their blood can be charged with impaired driving
- Young/new drivers are not allowed to have any alcohol content in their blood while driving

*When the alcohol content in a person's blood is more than 80 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of blood, the person can be convicted of being "over the legal limit" (being "over 0.08)". However, a person who is impaired by alcohol (not driving in a straight line, can not manage simple tasks, has slurred speech etc.) can be convicted of impaired driving, whether or not the person's blood alcohol content was over the "legal limit."*

Source: [Department of Justice – Fact Sheet On Impaired Driving](#)

#### **Slide 7: Scenario**

- **You are pulled over for suspected drinking and driving**
- **Your BAC is over the limit**
- **You lose your license and can face jail time if convicted**
- **You could have seriously injured or killed someone**

*Read the following scenario to the audience:*

*An officer suspects you are driving impaired – he pulls you over. He asks you a couple questions, sniffs the air and asks you to give a breath sample. He uses an approved screening device (ASD) to decide whether you have had enough alcohol to require you to take a breathalyzer test, which is more precise. If you can't blow into the ASD for some reason, the officer may be able to get a warrant for a blood sample. It's against the law the refuse to provide a breath or blood sample. Upon finding this out, you blow into the ASD, setting off the warning light – the amount of alcohol in your blood is over the legal limit. The officer suspends your license and calls a tow truck to tow your car. You are arrested, taken down to the station and you call a lawyer. You take a breathalyzer, which confirms you are over the legal limit. The police can now charge you under the Criminal Code. They take your picture, fingerprint you and give you a court date. If the courts determine you are guilty of drinking and driving, penalties can range from losing your license to jail time. Throughout the entire process, all you can think about is, wow – what if I had hurt someone?*

#### **Slide 8: Stats about impaired driving**

- **Over 1,000 Canadians-impaired and sober-die each year in alcohol-related crashes.**
- **About one-third of all Canadian drivers killed in car crashes had been drinking.**
- **These crashes cost Canadians over \$10.6 billion a year in lost wages, property damage and health-care costs.**

- **At a BAC level of .15, your likelihood of being in a collision where somebody dies increases by more than 65 times.**
- **If you are 19 and driving with a BAC of 0.08 to 0.09, you are 20 times more likely to be killed in a crash than you would be if you were sober.**

Source: [Transport Canada - Smashed: A sober look at drinking and driving](#)

**Slide 9: How can I help prevent drinking and driving?**

- **Pick a designated driver**
- **Call a cab**
- **Take the bus**
- **Call a friend, your parents or trusted person who is not impaired**
- **And,**

**IF YOU DRINK – DON'T DRIVE!**

*If you are going to be out drinking, decide ahead of time how you will be getting home. Whether you have a designated driver who does not drink that night, call a cab, take the bus, or have a parent or friend to call – plan this before you begin drinking. The main point is, if you drink, don't drive! If no other options are available, stay on a friend's couch or the floor. Getting into a vehicle after you have been drinking endangers not only yourself, but those around you.*

**Slide 10: Impaired driving while under the influence of drugs**

- *Ask students what kinds of drugs can impair your driving.*
- *Any drug that changes your mood, or the way you see and feel, will affect the way you drive. This is not only true for illegal drugs. There are prescription drugs and some over-the-counter drugs that can also impair your driving ability.*

**Slide 11: Drugs**

- **Taking drugs before driving - whether they are legal or not - is very dangerous**
- **In addition to illegal drugs such as marijuana, ecstasy and cocaine, legal drugs such as cough or cold medicines, pills and prescription medicines can impact your driving abilities**
- **Combining alcohol and drugs before driving can have an even greater effect on your driving than either one on their own**

**Slide 12: How can drugs affect my driving?**

- **Slow down your reaction time**
- **Make judging distances and making decisions more difficult**
- **Make it harder to steer, stay in your lane and drive at a steady speed**
- **You may feel more tired or disoriented**
- **You may find it harder to concentrate**

*Drugs slow down your reaction time. They make it harder to judge distances and make quick decisions on the road. They make it harder for you to steer, stay in your own lane*

and drive at a steady speed. You also may feel more tired or disoriented, and have a hard time concentrating on what you are doing.

**Slide 13: Drugs, Driving and the Law**

- **If an officer thinks you are driving while impaired, they will ask you to take a Standardized Field Sobriety Test**
- **The officer will check for signs of impairment**
- **If you seem impaired, you will be taken to the police station where an expert will conduct more tests**
- **You will be asked to provide a urine, saliva or blood sample**
- **Refusing to comply with the officer's request is a criminal offence**
- **The penalties for a conviction of driving under the influence of drugs are the same as for driving under the influence of alcohol**

*If an officer thinks you are driving while impaired by any drug, they will ask you to take a Standardized Field Sobriety Test. SFSTs are divided-attention tests that evaluate a subject's ability to multitask and are administered at the roadside. The officer will check your eyes, see if you are having trouble keeping your balance or are showing other signs of impairment. If you do seem impaired, you will be taken to the police station where an expert will perform Drug Recognition Expert evaluations (DRE). DRE evaluations are a 12-step process that incorporates a series of behavioural assessments such as testing your coordination, a highly reliable eye test, interviewing you and taking your temperature and pulse rate. You will be asked to provide a urine, saliva or blood sample. Refusing to comply with the officer's request is a criminal offence. The penalties for a conviction of driving under the influence of drugs are the same as those for driving while under the influence of alcohol (will be discussed further in slide 16).*

Source: [Transport Canada - Smashed: A sober look at drinking and driving](#)  
RCMP – [Drug Recognition Experts](#)

**Slide 14: Is it safe to drive if you only drink a couple of beers and/or smoke a joint?**

*NOTE: Allow students to answer the question. Ensure that the information they give is not out of line with the purposes of the discussion. If they mention a fact they “heard of” or are not sure of, make note of it and address it or correct it later on.*

- *A common misperception is that it is safe to drink one or two beers and smoke cannabis in order to get a “buzz” and still be capable of driving. In reality, cannabis use can magnify the effects of alcohol, which makes combining cannabis, alcohol and driving even more dangerous.*
- *Cannabis use is thought by some to be a safer alternative than consuming alcohol when one has the intention of driving. This belief is mistaken given that the effects of cannabis greatly impair one’s ability to drive.*
- *The effects of cannabis are felt most intensely for 2 to 4 hours; however, cannabis can be detected in a urine sample for up to 4 weeks after its use.*

**Slide 15: What are the criminal consequences to driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol?**

**Slide 16:**

	<b>Minimum punishment</b>	<b>Prohibition from driving</b>
<b>For a first offence</b>	<b>A fine of at least \$600</b>	<b>A prohibition from driving for at least one year and up to three years</b>
<b>For a second offence</b>	<b>At least 14 days in prison</b>	<b>A prohibition from driving for at least two years and up to five years</b>
<b>For subsequent offences</b>	<b>At least 90 days in prison</b>	<b>A prohibition from driving for at least three years and up to a lifetime ban</b>

*Minimum penalties for driving while impaired are outlined in the Canadian Criminal Code. They include:*

- **First offence:** a minimum of a \$600 fine and a 1 to 3 year driving prohibition
- **Second offence:** 14 day jail sentence and a 2 to 5 year driving prohibition
- **Third offence and subsequent offences:** 90 day jail sentence and a 3 year driving prohibition and up to a lifetime ban

*In addition to these minimum penalties, each province may have its own additional penalties. Depending on the type of offence, the sentencing judge may also sentence the offender to serve a certain number of hours performing community service or to take part in an ignition interlock program, which requires an appropriate breath sample (below the 0.08 BAC) by the driver in order to start and run their vehicle.*

*NOTE: These are the minimums – the consequences are worse if you already have a suspended license or are convicted of impaired driving causing bodily harm or impaired driving causing death. Penalties for impaired driving causing bodily harm can result in a 10 year driving prohibition and up to 10 years in prison, while impaired driving causing death can result in a lifetime ban from driving, and life in prison.*

Source: [Department of Justice – Fact Sheet on Impaired Driving](#)

**Slide 17: Driving while fatigued, tired, drained, worn out...and such.**

*An often overlooked form of impairment is driving while tired or fatigued. People often do not act on the signs of fatigue early enough. Gauging your fatigue can be difficult, but learning to recognize warning signs is a great way to minimize your risk of driving while tired.*

*In Ontario alone, well over a million drivers (14.5%) admit that they have fallen asleep or nodded off while driving at least once in the past year.*

*In a 2008 survey conducted of Ontario police officers by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation, a majority of officers surveyed (95.9%) identified fatigued driving as a serious problem and most of them (89.2%) ranked the problem as being as important as,*

*or comparable to impaired driving. Most of the officers who were surveyed (92.4%) also stated that they had stopped a driver they suspected to be impaired because of alcohol or drug use, only to discover that the driver was fatigued instead.*

Source: [Traffic Injury Research Foundation – The Facts about Fatigued Driving in Ontario – A Guidebook for Police](#)

*Ask students: What are some causes of fatigue? (Let them respond, filling in any answers they may not have come up with)*

*Answers:*

- *Having too little sleep*
- *Having interrupted or fragmented sleep*
- *Chronic sleep debt, or being sleep deprived for a long period of time*
- *Circadian factors associated with driving patterns, this means driving when you would normally be sleeping*
- *Undiagnosed or untreated sleep disorders*
- *The use of sedating medications, or alcohol when already tired*

**Slide 18: If you find you \_\_\_\_\_, you may be fatigued.**

- **are frequently yawning**
- **have sore or heavy eyelids, or are blinking/rubbing your eyes a lot**
- **are bored, irritable or restless**
- **can't concentrate**
- **forget to check mirrors and blind spots**
- **are driving at inconsistent speeds or drift from your lane**
- **miss turns or exits**
- **daydreaming or wandering thoughts**
- **nod off**

**Slide 19: What are some effects of fatigue?**

*Let students answer this question, then provide them with the following information.*

*Fatigue or drowsiness caused by fatigue can impair you in the following ways:*

- *Impaired reaction time, judgment and vision*
- *Problems with information processing and short term memory*
- *Decreased performance, vigilance and motivation*
- *Increased moodiness and aggressive behaviours*

*If you experience any of this symptoms or signs of fatigue while driving, you should stop and rest.*

*Ask students ways they can reduce fatigued driving. Allow students to give answers, and then proceed to the next two slides.*

**Slide 20: Ways to reduce fatigued driving**

- **make sure you get enough sleep before you go on a trip**

- **on long trips, switch drivers every few hours; you should not drive until you are too tired to drive anymore - switch before you are too tired**
- **don't schedule trips before or after your usual wake-up and bed times**
- **drive during daylight hours when possible**
- **Take non-drowsy medication, or plan alternate modes of transportation if you must take medicine that makes you drowsy**
- **Take a nap**

*It is suggested to take 15-20 minutes nap and no longer since napping for more than 20 minutes can make you groggy for at least 15 minutes after waking.*

*Recognizing the onset of fatigue or drowsiness and taking a break before you start to feel fatigued or drowsy are very important; failing to recognize the warning signs of fatigue or drowsiness can seriously increase the chances for falling asleep or nodding off while driving. Once you start to feel fatigued or drowsy it may be particularly difficult to determine or gauge when you will actually fall asleep.*

Source: [Traffic Injury Research Foundation – Fatigued Driving](#)  
[National Sleep Foundation – drowsydriving.org](#)

**Slide 21: Distracted Driving**

- **Talking on a cell phone**
- **Texting**
- **Reading (books, maps, newspapers)**
- **Using a GPS (should have route planned before you get on the road)**
- **Watching videos or movies**
- **Playing extremely loud music**

*Distractions while driving can also impair your ability to drive safely.*

**Slide 22: Distracted Driving**

- **Bans on the use of handheld electronics while driving are being introduced all over the country**
- **Drivers who text, type, e-mail, dial or chat using handheld devices can face a fine of \$60 to \$500 upon conviction.**

Source: [Ottawa Sun, Wednesday September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009. “Cell phone ban gets start date”](#)

**Slide 23: Penalties can include:**

- **Provincial offences such as:**
  - **Failure to drive in marked lane**
  - **Unsafe lane change**
  - **Disobeying a sign**
  - **Following too closely**
- **Criminal Offences such as:**
  - **Dangerous driving**

- **Criminal negligence**
- **Impaired driving**
- **(or others if you end up hurting someone)**

*A driver who causes a collision or who is observed driving unsafely while using a cell phone can be charged under a number of provincial, territorial or federal laws including but not limited to, those related to dangerous driving, careless driving and criminal negligence causing death or injury.*

Source: [Transport Canada – Cell Phones and Driving Info Sheets](#)

**Slide 24: Indirect Costs of Impaired Driving**

- **Increased insurance costs**
- **Fines**
- **Loss of license**
- **Rehabilitation programs**
- **Court costs**
- **Hospital costs**
- **Civil suits (if you hurt someone and are sued)**

*Costs for being convicted of an impaired driving charge include:*

- *Increased insurance costs*
- *Criminal code fines*
- *License reinstatement fees*
- *Rehabilitation programs, including Ignition Interlock and Back on Track, which are estimated to cost \$1,500 and \$475 respectively.*
- *Court costs which can range from \$2,000 to \$10,000.*
- *Other costs include hospital bills, vehicle impoundment charges and damages to your vehicle.*

**Slide 25: Other costs pale in comparison to the cost of someone’s life.**

*While these costs may seem to add up, they come nowhere close to equalling the loss of a life. Impaired driving can have fatal consequences – you, those in the vehicle with you, or innocent bystanders who may be in the wrong place at the wrong time may pay with their lives.*

**Slide 26: Peer Pressure**

- **Most youth will feel pressured to drink or do drugs at some point in their lives**
- **It is important for you to know your limits, understand what you are comfortable doing and not doing, and be able to communicate this to others**
- **A good friend will still be your friend no matter what you choose to do and they will respect your opinion**

**Slide 27: Peer Pressure**

**Remember that you can have an effect on your peers as well. If you have a strong stance on impaired driving, others may follow in your footsteps. For example, if you refuse to get into a vehicle with someone who is impaired, others will be less likely to do so as well.**

**Slide 28: Hosting an event**

- **Do not provide or make alcohol the main focus of the event**
- **Refrain from drinking or drink moderately**
- **Be attentive to your guests' behaviour and appearance**
- **Do not provide alcohol to a guest who is or may be intoxicated**
- **Do not combine alcohol with other activities such as swimming**
- **Make food and non-alcoholic beverages available**
- **Arrange for alternate means of transportation**
- **Stop serving alcohol hours before the end of the event**

*If you are hosting an event, there are a couple things you can do to ensure it is safe and fun for all guests:*

- *Do not provide or make alcohol the main focus of the event*
- *Refrain from drinking or drink moderately. The less you drink the more capable you are of anticipating problems, supervising the event and intervening in order to avoid potential risks.*
- *Be attentive to your guests' behaviour and appearance. Be on the look out for people who may seem ill, or extremely impaired*
- *Do not provide alcohol to a guest who is or may be intoxicated.*
- *Do not combine alcohol with other activities such as swimming.*
- *Make food and non-alcoholic beverages available*
- *Arrange for alternate means of transportation – have numbers for taxis available, bus routes and stops planned, offer guests places to sleep, or tell guests to bring a tent*
- *Stop serving alcohol hours before the end of the event*

Source: [MADD Canada - LCBO's responsible hosting tips promote safe holiday entertaining](#)

[Transport Canada - Smashed: A sober look at drinking and driving “The Truly Thoughtful Host”](#)

**Slide 29: What can you do?**

*Let students offer some suggestions about what they can do to help prevent impaired driving.*

**Slide 30: If you spot an impaired driver...**

**Contact the police and give them the following information:**

- **Location and direction of travel of the suspected impaired driver**
- **License plate number, car make, model and colour of the vehicle**
- **Description of the driver and your present location**

*In order to prevent potential injuries or deaths, it is suggested to report suspected impaired drivers to local police by calling (**Presenter: please insert the emergency number of your detachment if 911 is not available**) or dialling 911. It is important to avoid creating a situation that is more dangerous than the one that you are trying to prevent, so contact police and let them handle the situation. When contacting the police, make available the following information:*

- *The location and direction of travel of the suspected impaired driver and the time of your observation*
- *The license plate number, car make, model, color and any other information you can provide about the vehicle*
- *Description of the driver*
- *Your present location*

**Slide 31: Get Involved!**

- **Contact your local student association or organization against impaired driving.**
  - [www.madd.ca](http://www.madd.ca)
  - [www.cyaid.com](http://www.cyaid.com)
  - [www.osaid.org](http://www.osaid.org)
- **Hold an event or do classroom activities to educate others about impaired driving.**

*Being concerned about impaired driving is the first step toward acting responsibly. If you would like to take an active role in encouraging others to act responsibly, a number of routes may be considered.*

*You can **contact your local student association** against impaired driving to find out if a chapter already exists in your area. If none exist, you have the option of initiating and coordinating the creation of a local chapter. Visit [www.cyaid.com](http://www.cyaid.com) for an example chapter and their successes.*

*You may undertake a smaller scale yet effective initiative by **holding a school event** promoting responsible driving or by doing classroom activities about impaired driving.*

**Slide 32: For more information visit:**

- **Transport Canada**
  - [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)
- **Traffic Injury Research Foundation**
  - [www.tirf.ca](http://www.tirf.ca)
- **Department of Justice**
  - [www.justice.gc.ca](http://www.justice.gc.ca)
- **Mothers Against Drunk Driving**
  - [www.madd.ca](http://www.madd.ca)
- **Canada Safety Council**
  - [www.safety-council.org](http://www.safety-council.org)

- **Ontario Community Council on Impaired Driving**  
- [www.occid.org](http://www.occid.org)

*If you want more information on impaired driving you may find the **websites** on the screen very useful.*

*Does anyone have any **questions** about the presentation?*

***Thanks** for inviting me to come talk to you today!*